

## Marae Moana Policy 2016-2020

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## 1.0 Vision

“To tatou Marae Moana - akatapuia, akonoia, taangaangaia ma te akamanako, ei urunga no to tatou ra manava e to te uki ki mua”.

“Our Marae Moana - our nourishing source of life; respected, cared for and used wisely, today and for generations to come.”

### 2.0 Purpose

To conserve biodiversity and natural assets in the oceans, reefs and islands while ensuring sustainable development of economic growth interests.

## 3.0 Scope

1. The geographical scope of the Marae Moana Oceans Policy 2016-2020 (henceforth the Policy) covers:
  - a. Marine areas within national jurisdiction (that is the Cook Islands Internal waters, Territorial Sea, Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf);
  - b. Any other marine area that becomes under the partial or full control of the Cook Islands.
2. The Policy includes those areas established under domestic legislation for the protection and management of the marine environment including the *tai roto, akau, takere and moana*.
3. The Policy recognises the connectivity between the terrestrial and marine environment and supports the management of activities on land which may adversely impact the marine environment.
4. The Policy shall facilitate the coordination, research and information sharing in order to sustainably manage and protect the Marae Moana.
5. The policy shall enable zoning for multiple use which shall include, but not be limited to port development, renewable energy production, tourism, protected areas, large scale commercial fishing, artisanal fishing and seabed exploration and mining.
6. The Policy shall guide activities of the Cook Islands Government and its agents in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction in accordance with international law and best practice.
7. The policy shall support and encourage Cook Islands traditional knowledge and practices around marine custodianship including *ra’ui* and *ra’ui mutukore*.
8. The Policy shall ensure the protection of the marine environment as a priority whilst providing for sustainable development activities.

## 4.0 Horizon and Review

The horizon of the vision is 20 years. After coming into effect the Policy will be reviewed every 4 years.

## 5.0 Context

National plans to maximise opportunities in pelagic fisheries and to develop our national seabed mineral resources have led to calls for the establishment of and a policy framework that will protect the marine environment and sustain Cook Islands maritime cultural heritage.

Offshore fisheries have existed in the Cook Islands’ waters for many years. The Ministry of Marine Resources has recently been seeking to gain additional revenue from commercial fishing activities.

Average offshore tuna catch per year in the Cook Islands EEZ was 3,334 tonnes during the period 2005-2008 and increased to an average of 14,831 tonnes between 2009-2014 with 27,400 tonnes fished in 2012. Revenue from foreign fishing increased from \$368 thousand in 2008 to \$12.7 million in 2014/15.

Whilst manganese nodules on the Cook Islands deep seabed have been recognised as a potential revenue source since the 1970's, it was not until the enactment of the Seabed Minerals Act 2009 and subsequent establishment of the Seabed Minerals Authority (SBMA) that the first steps are now being taken towards the exploitation of our national deep sea mineral resources.

The recently developed Cook Islands National Maritime Transport Policy reflects the growing recognition of the impacts of shipping and marine transportation on the marine environment. Cruise ship visits have become more frequent and marine activities have diversified; e.g. whale watching, outrigger paddling, traditional vaka voyaging, kite-surfing and speed-boating.

With the growth in the tourism industry since the 1970's, particularly on Rarotonga and Aitutaki, there has been an increase in the construction of beachfront tourist accommodation, as well as the development of associated industries. This has presented new challenges for the coastal marine environment in these islands.

As a consequence of these expanding activities and concerns, the Cook Islands Prime Minister Henry Puna announced at the Pacific Islands Leader's Forum in 2012 Government's intention to establish a multiple-use marine park in the southern half of the Cook Islands Exclusive Economic Zone later named "Marae Moana". Consultations with Cook Islands communities, stakeholders and government officials since that time have shaped the policy framework of the marine park. A common comment during these consultations was that government should expand the scope of the marine park to include the northern half of the Cook Islands Exclusive Economic Zone.

The resulting "Marae Moana Policy" is consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) which defines maritime boundaries, establishes the International Seabed Authority, and outlines rules governing the sea, as well as rights, jurisdiction and duties of states and those using the sea. An essential element of the Marae Moana Policy is the use of marine resources and the marine environment whilst protecting biological diversity in accordance with the principles and objectives of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.

Reflecting the trans-boundary and dynamic nature of the ocean, this policy lies within the framework of the Pacific Islands Regional Oceans Policy 2005 (PIROP) which aims to improve ocean governance and ensure sustainable use of the ocean and its resources. The 2012 announcement of the Marae Moana is the Cook Islands government's commitment to the Pacific Oceanscape 2009, which is the Pacific Islands Leaders' implementation vehicle for PIROP. At the national level, the Marae Moana is guided by the Cook Islands National Sustainable Development Plan. The following policies have been taken into consideration, as well as others, as appropriate:

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2002

Seabed Minerals Policy 2014

Offshore Fisheries Policy 2013

Cook Islands National Plan of Action for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds (NPOA-Seabirds) 2012

Marine Resources (Shark Conservation) Regulations 2012

Cook Islands Ministry of Marine Resources Action Plan for Sea Turtle Mitigation 2008

Cook Islands Aquaculture Development Plan 2012-2016

Cook Islands National Maritime Transport Policy 2014

Climate and Disaster Compatible Development Policy 2013-2016

Marae Moana Policy 2016-2020

Cook Islands National Integrated Water Resource Management Policy 2014

As well as the following draft policies:

Draft Policy for Coastal Fisheries Resources

Draft Cook Islands Trade Policy Statement

Draft Tourism Master Plan Update Cook Islands Tourism: 2005-2015 A Geotourism Strategy

Draft Ministry of Marine Resources Policy Paper for the Cook Islands Whale Sanctuary Bill

Draft Rarotonga Environment Council Policy on the Foreshore 2002

Draft Rarotonga Environment Council Policy on Sloping Lands 2002

Draft Rarotonga Environment Policy on Wetlands 2002

Additionally, the following Cook Islands legislation has been used as references:

Biosecurity Act 2008

Environment Act 2003

House of Ariki Act 1966

Marine Resources Act 2005

Maritime Transport Act 2008

Natural Heritage Trust Act 1999

Prevention of Marine Pollution Act 1998

Seabed Minerals Act 2009

Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zone Act 1977

Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zone (Amendment) Act 2011

Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zone (Amendment) Act 2012

## 6.0 Principles

The following principles should be applied to all decisions and actions relating to the Marae Moana:

### *1. Protection, Conservation and Restoration*

The protection of areas within the Marae Moana and conservation of biodiversity for cultural and natural heritage is paramount and should be shared by all Cook Islanders.

### *2. Sustainable Use to Maximise Benefits*

The use of our marine resources to maximise benefits whilst meeting key environmental objectives to benefit current and future generations of Cook Islanders should be fundamental in the implementation of the Marae Moana.

### *3. The Precautionary Principle*

The adoption of the Precautionary Principle of the Rio Declaration where there are threats of serious or irreversible damages, in relation to lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing cost effective measures to prevent environmental degradation in accordance with the Cook Islands capabilities in the implementation of the Marae Moana.

### *4. Community Participation*

The participation by all stakeholders in the planning and implementation processes, incorporating: information exchange, consultation, respect for differing points of view, recognition of culture and traditions, equitable access to opportunities for present and future generations, easily understood and openly justified processes and the shared ownership of responsibility should be promoted and encouraged in the decision making processes of the Marae Moana.

### *5. Transparency and Accountability*

The processes for assessing, planning, allocating, managing and evaluating management of ocean resources should enable transparent and clear lines of accountability.

### *6. Integrated Management*

The integration of decision making across all relevant stakeholders (Government, non-government and external partners) should be pursued in the operationalization of the Marae Moana.

### *7. Investigation and research*

A culture of investigation and research as a basis of discussion and decision-making should be fostered. Ocean planning and management decisions should be based on the best available scientific and other information, recognising that current information regarding ocean resources may be limited.

### *8. Ecosystem-Based Management*

Ecosystem based approach to the management of natural resources that aims to sustain the health, resilience and diversity of ecosystems of species while allowing for sustainable use by humans of the goods and services they provide should be paramount in the Marae Moana.

## 9. Sustainable Financing

Adequate funding for activities implemented under this Policy should be pursued to achieve desired outcomes.

### 7.0 Definitions

“Akau” means the coral reef including the reef crest and reef slope.

“Aronga Mana” as in the definition in the Environment Act 2003 includes those persons vested with a title in accordance with the native custom and usage of the islands of the Cook Islands from which that title is derived and which title is recognised by such native custom and usage as entitling the holder to be a member of the Aronga Mana of the Cook Islands.

“Baseline of territorial sea” has the same meaning as that in the Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zone Act 1977 and amendments.

“Conservation” means management of natural resources by humans with the goals of minimizing resource waste and sustaining supplies for current and future generations.

“Continental Shelf” means the seabed and subsoil of those submarine areas that extend beyond and adjacent to the territorial sea of the Cook Islands, having as their outer limits a line measured seaward from the baseline, every point of which line is distant 200 nautical miles from the nearest point of the baseline.

“Ecosystem” is a self-sustaining natural system of living organisms interacting with one another and the non-living components of the environment.

“Sustainable development” is development that encourages forms of economic growth that meet the basic needs of the current generations of humans and other species without preventing future generations of humans and other species from meeting their basic needs; it may also discourage environmentally harmful and unsustainable forms of economic growth. It is the economic component of an environmentally sustainable society.

“Exclusive Economic Zone” is the sea zone prescribed by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea over which the Cook Islands has the sovereign rights regarding the exploration and use of marine resources, including energy production from water and wind. It stretches from the baseline out to 200 nautical miles (nm) from its coast.

“Internal waters” include any areas of the sea that are on the landward side of the baseline of the territorial sea of the Cook Islands.

“Marine Spatial Planning” is a public process of analysing and allocating the spatial distribution of human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic and social objectives that have been specified through a political process.

“Moana” means the ocean.

“Pa Enuā” means the islands of the Cook Islands outside of the administrative capital Rarotonga.

“Precautionary Principle” means Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration stating that when there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost effective measures to prevent environmental degradation according to the capabilities of the Cook Islands to do so. Measures should reflect the levels of uncertainty and possibility for harm, as determined by a participatory process and can range from refraining from the activity to trialling the activity and monitoring impacts.

“Policy” means this Marae Moana Policy.

“Ra’ui” is a temporary ban on the harvest of a resource or access to a particular area. It can be applied to fruits of trees, crops, and species of seafood, fish or areas of the lagoon or land. *Ra’ui* is declared by the chief of a tribe.

“Ra’ui Mutukore” is a permanent ban on the harvest of a resource or access to a particular area. Ra’ui Mutukore is declared by the chief of a tribe.

“Resource” means anything obtained from the environment to meet human needs and wants. It can also be applied to other species.

“Seabed Minerals” has the same meaning as in the Seabed Minerals Act 2009.

“Tai roto” means the lagoon.

“Territorial Sea” means those areas of the sea having as their inner limits, the baseline described in the Territorial Seas and Exclusive Economic Zone Act 1977 and, as their outer limits, a line measured seaward from that baseline, every point of which is a distant 12 nautical miles from the nearest point of the baseline.



## 8.0 Policy Objectives

The following are the policy objectives for the Marae Moana:

### 1: Enhance Conservation and Ecological Sustainability

**Issue:** Degradation of the Cook Islands marine environment.

**Policy Objective:** To maintain genetic, species and ecosystem diversity and restore degraded ecosystems and habitats to become resilient and biologically productive whilst providing the opportunity for ecologically sustainable use.

**Rationale:** Healthy ecosystems are the basis of natural resource use, economic development and quality of human life. Therefore it is essential to maintain genetic, species and ecosystem diversity and sustain ecosystem services. Healthy ecosystems are better able to provide services such as natural pest control, natural purification of air and water, coastal protection and natural resources for food, shelter, medicine etc. Such ecosystem services and natural resources will be extremely costly or impossible to replace if compromised. Additionally, healthy ecosystems are also more resilient against the adverse impacts of climate change.

#### **Policies:**

To address the issue and objective stated, we will endeavour to ensure that:

- 1.1 National conservation and ecological sustainability policies and strategies shall be applied in concert with this Policy;
- 1.2 The integrity of ecosystems shall be maintained as a priority while developing opportunities for natural resource use;
- 1.3 Marine protected areas shall be established to preserve biodiverse, biologically unique and/or geophysically and ecologically representative;
- 1.4 Special measures shall be established for the protection of ecosystems, habitats or species that are rare, endangered or threatened;
- 1.5 New and existing inshore marine protected areas, *ra'ui*, and *ra'ui mutukore* shall be established and/or supported to enhance food security, intrinsic value, protect and improve biodiversity, rehabilitated or restored areas and traditional customary practices;
- 1.6 Education and enforcement strategies and economic incentives may be used to conserve biodiversity and protect the marine environment; and
- 1.7 Any marine or oceanic development shall have a low ecological footprint, positive social impact and be resilient to impacts of climate change and adhere to the precautionary principle.

#### **Policy Indicators:**

- 1.1 Number of established marine invasives  
(Related to NSDP Indicator 10.3: Number of reported biosecurity threats)
- 1.2 Percent Coral Cover  
(Related to NSDP Indicator 12.1: Coral Coverage)
- 1.3 Biodiversity loss (NSDP Indicator 11.3)
- 1.4 Area of protected (regulatory and customary protection) exclusive economic zone (NSDP Indicator 12.2)
- 1.5 Number of species considered overfished, or vulnerable to extinction using IUCN criteria

1.6 Number of Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) protected under the Convention of Biological Diversity process within national waters

## 2: Improve Integrated Planning & Adaptive Management through greater collaboration

**Issue:** Fragmented approach to marine and ocean resources management.

**Policy Objective:** To eliminate fragmentation and enable integrated planning of the Marae Moana.

**Rationale:** The Cook Islands maritime space is used by multiple groups and is managed by different island, national, and traditional authorities and agencies resulting the fragmentation of decision making. Natural resources must be collectively managed, using strategies that are coordinated, evaluated and adapted to achieve the objectives of this Policy.

### **Policies:**

To address the issue and objective stated, we will endeavour to ensure that:

- 2.1 Management of the Marae Moana shall be coordinated across the various key stakeholders;
- 2.2 Decisions on key management areas shall be made by key relevant stakeholders exercising the principle of community participation and representation;
- 2.3 The health of the Marae Moana and effectiveness of management measures shall be continually monitored, evaluated and reviewed ; and
- 2.4 A collaborative approach shall be used to manage and reduce the impact of land based activities on the marine environment using a Ridge to Reef, Reef to Ocean approach and other approaches.

### **Policy Indicators:**

- 2.1 Number of annual meetings of the Marae Moana Council and related bodies
- 2.2 Lagoon water quality (NSDP Indicator 12.4)
- 2.3 Number of Marae Moana initiatives reflected in agencies business plans.

## 3. To sustainably develop the Cook Islands Marine Resources

**Issue:** Greater economic growth in the marine resources sector through ecological and socially beneficial means.

**Policy Objective:** To pursue opportunities to make optimum economic use of marine resources whilst ensuring ecological sustainability and social development.

**Rationale:** Marine resources provide opportunities for an improved quality of life through their economic value, their social, cultural and recreational value and their environmental value in terms of ecosystem services.

### **Policies:**

To address the issue and objective stated, we will endeavour to ensure that:

*Fisheries*

- 3.1 National fisheries and trade policies and strategies shall be applied in concert with this Policy;
- 3.2 Market accreditation for seafood exports shall be achieved in accordance with any Trade Policy Statements published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration, or any other relevant agency;
- 3.3 Effective fisheries management of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction shall be promoted, particularly in areas adjacent to our EEZ including semi-enclosed and fully enclosed areas in accordance with international law;
- 3.4 Public consultation shall be maintained throughout any government led development of the fisheries industry; and
- 3.5 There shall be shared responsibility and management between agencies, Aronga mana and other stakeholders involved in the industry.

#### *Seabed Minerals*

- 3.6 National seabed minerals policies and strategies shall be applied in concert with this policy;
- 3.7 International best practice shall be followed during the development of the seabed minerals industry, whilst adhering to the precautionary principle;
- 3.8 Public consultation shall be maintained throughout the development of the seabed minerals industry; and
- 3.9 There shall be shared responsibility and management between government agencies, Aronga mana and other stakeholders involved in the industry.

#### *General*

- 3.10 An economic feasibility, environmental and social impact study shall be conducted prior to implementing any significant maritime economic development project and the results of each study shall be made available to the public in accordance with best accepted international practices;
- 3.11 Decisions on marine bio-prospecting shall be made on the collective recommendations of a multi-stakeholder group to the Marae Moana Council;
- 3.12 Access and use of genetic material in the marine environment including bio-prospecting shall incorporate the principles of the Nagoya Protocol and protect intellectual property rights including traditional knowledge; and
- 3.13 Any future marine resource development activities not yet known must comply with the precautionary principle and this Policy.

#### **Policy Indicators:**

- 3.1 Percentage of maximum yield that is fished by distant fishing nations (NSDP Indicator 12.3)
- 3.2 Economic returns from oceanic and lagoon resources (NSDP Indicator 12.5)

## 4. Marine Tourism Development

**Issue:** Realising greater opportunities for ecologically sustainable and socially beneficial growth in the marine tourism sector.

**Policy Objective:** To harness opportunities in the tourism industry for optimum economic use of Marae Moana, whilst ensuring ecological sustainability and social development.

**Rationale:** Tourism is the largest industry in the Cook Islands and there remain untapped opportunities in the maritime area.

**Policies:**

To address the issue and objectives stated, we will endeavour to ensure that:

- 4.1 Any tourism development policies shall be developed taking into account the principles and objectives of this policy;
- 4.2 Visitor accommodation should strive to align with this policy in promoting high quality, low density development that will minimise impacts on the coastal marine environment;
- 4.3 Explore the possibility of setbacks and other approaches as a method of climate proofing and reducing environmental stresses on the coastal marine environment;
- 4.4 Higher priority shall be placed on experience based tourism (for example, fishing, tours, homestays, community engagement) as a tourist market to help maintain the Cook Islands environment and culture; and
- 4.5 Explore ways to continue to increase revenue from tourism without undue stress on water and waste infrastructure

**Policy Indicators:**

- 4.1 Percentage of new Tourism Development projects that demonstrate consideration of the Marae Moana
- 4.2 Percentage of visitors participating in experience based tourism activities
- 4.3 Percentage of visitors that visit the country primarily because of the promotion of the Marae Moana

## 5. Maritime Transport & Safety

**Issue:** Sustainable and safe maritime transportation, including minimisation of preconditions leading to search and rescue operations in accordance with international maritime obligations.

**Policy Objective:** To develop the maritime industry towards meeting international standards including a regular, reliable and safe inter-island shipping service.

**Rationale:** A good reputation as a flag state has the potential to increase shipping registry revenue. Improved maritime safety should minimise search and rescue operations, reduce injury and loss of life and free up limited maritime assets and resources. An improved inter-island shipping service will facilitate development in the Cook Islands.

**Policies:**

To address the issue and objective stated, we will endeavour to ensure that:

- 5.1 National maritime transport policies and strategies shall be applied in concert with this Policy;
- 5.2 The Cook Islands shall register ships that meet international standards for safety, labour and environmental sustainability; and
- 5.3 Maritime safety practices for tourism operators and other users within the Marae Moana shall be improved.

**Policy Indicators:**

5.1 Percentage of islands with regular and reliable shipping services (NSDP Indicator 6.2)

5.2 Annual number of search and rescue operations per domestic voyage or fishing trip

## 6. Marine Spatial Planning

**Issue:** There are a growing number of uses of the marine environment potentially leading to increasing spatial conflicts between users.

**Policy Objective:** To coordinate use of the Marae Moana through zoning and a management plan.

**Rationale:** With the development of new uses and the expansion of existing ones, in both coastal and oceanic marine areas, there is increasing potential for environmental impacts and conflict between users. Some uses for natural resources may not be compatible with others and some natural resources and sensitive areas require special protective measures. Zones help to separate incompatible uses, provide assurance and security to users that there is space designated for their activities, and provide for the protection of significant habitats, species, and ecosystems.

### **Policies:**

To address the issue and objective stated, we will endeavour to ensure that:

- 6.1 A marine zoning and management plan will be developed for the Marae Moana;
- 6.2 Research and monitoring data should be used in the development, implementation and evaluation of management decisions, resource management plans and a marine zoning and management plan; and
- 6.3 Consider relevant internationally recognised research and processes including Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas and Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas.

### **Policy Indicators:**

- 6.1 Establishment of a zoning and marine spatial planning process for the Marae Moana
- 6.2 Establishment of the Marae Moana zoning plan
- 6.3 Percentage of activities in compliance with the Marae Moana zoning plan

## 7. Transparent Management Processes

**Issue:** Legislation that is lacking in some cases the requirement for transparency and accountability in the operationalization of the Marae Moana.

**Policy Objective:** To ensure transparent, collaborative and accountable management processes related to the Marae Moana.

**Rationale:** Transparency helps to build trust and cooperation and promotes accountability. Whilst it may seem difficult, disadvantageous or even dangerous to disclose information about an activity, the use of transparent processes tends to be beneficial to managers in the long term and will make management successful overall, by, for example reducing post-management decision conflicts.

### **Policies:**

To address the issue and objective stated, we will endeavour to ensure that:

- 7.1 Management processes within the Marae Moana shall be characterised by participatory planning, transparency, accountability and consultation;
- 7.2 Licensing decisions for resource use shall involve key stakeholders;
- 7.3 A culture of openness and trust shall be built by making every effort to ensure data and information is available, including during negotiations for the demarcation of zones;
- 7.4 Confidentiality shall be treated as the exception and not the rule and will be considered on a case-by-case basis;
- 7.5 The decision-making process for management of the Marae Moana shall be inclusive of stakeholder representatives through their attendance at meetings, but if closed meetings are necessary, summarised minutes of those meetings shall be made publicly available;
- 7.6 Processes for voting (and abstentions due to conflicts of interest) shall be clearly recorded in meeting minutes;
- 7.7 Relevant reports which include monitoring, compliance and enforcement and an evaluation of management decisions shall be made publicly available upon adoption by the agency completing the report;
- 7.8 Information about all public revenue from marine resources shall be disclosed and disseminated as prescribed by national processes and international best practice; and
- 7.9 Marine research results especially water quality testing shall be made publicly available.

**Policy Indicators:**

- 7.1 Percentage of refusals by agencies for requests made under the Official Information Act 2008 and the Ombudsmen's office to share information related to the Marae Moana
- 7.2 Number and type of organisations involved in Marae Moana management processes

## 8. Socially Responsible Marine & Maritime Development

**Issue:** Small human resources base from which to draw expertise and stimulate development. Poorly planned economic development can have negative social repercussions.

**Policy Objective:** To minimise the negative social impacts of marine and maritime development, while maximising the positive, and to support an equitable society with equal opportunities for all.

**Rationale:** The ultimate objective of economic development is to improve a population's quality of life. If not done correctly, economic development can create socio-economic inequality which may result in negative social issues.

**Policies:**

To address the issue and objective stated, we will endeavour to ensure that:

- 8.1 In developing marine resources all socially, environmentally and economically feasible avenues will be pursued to minimise social impacts;
- 8.2 Work towards achieving food security by minimising the negative impact of offshore and coastal marine resource exploitation on local island communities; and
- 8.3 Facilitate access to income generation by strengthening knowledge and skills on opportunities to sustainably utilise the marine environment.

**Policy Indicators:**

- 8.1 Percentage of people engaged in marine/maritime development activities

8.2 Percentage of development projects related to marine/maritime activities that include social and environmental impact assessment as part of their planning process

## 9. Maritime Cultural Heritage

**Issue:** With changing demographics and the adoption of western lifestyles, Cook Islands culture and heritage is being eroded. There is also an under-appreciation of the importance of western science, traditional ecological knowledge and the traditional leader's role in marine resources management.

**Policy Objective:** To protect maritime cultural heritage.

**Rationale:** Cultural diversity is recognised by the United Nations as important to humanity. The preservation of Cook Islands maritime cultural heritage is also important for cultural identity, national pride and development.

### **Policies:**

To address the issue and objective stated, we will endeavour to ensure that:

- 9.1 Sustainable Cook Islands traditional marine management practices will be recognised as both a cultural practice and environmental management tool;
- 9.2 The roles of traditional leadership, traditional and local ecological knowledge, customs and practices and best available scientific data will be respected, recognised and supported in any new management arrangements; and
- 9.3 Important marine/maritime related cultural heritage sites will be protected.

### **Policy Indicators:**

9.1 Coverage (area) of traditional *ra'ui* and *ra'ui mutukore* areas within the Marae Moana taking into account the need to balance traditional practices with scientific advice

## 10. Partnerships

**Issue:** Insufficient resources for facilitating research, ecosystem and species monitoring, stakeholder consultation as well as monitoring, compliance and enforcement.

**Policy Objective:** To promote and harness genuine and durable partnerships in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Marae Moana.

**Rationale:** Partnerships between organisations within the country and abroad will help to ensure efficient use of resources, facilitate the coordination of strategic plans, draw on the most relevant expertise and provide a learning environment for sharing lessons from similar initiatives.

### **Policies:**

To address the issue and objective stated, we will endeavour to ensure that:

- 10.1 Partnerships will be formed with organisations that have expertise useful to and objectives in common with or supportive of Marae Moana; and
- 10.2 Partners will be kept informed and involved at all stages of Marae Moana development and implementation.

**Policy Indicators:**

10.1 Number of partners involved in the Marae Moana implementation

## 11. Education, Communication, Consultation and Commitment

**Issues:** Low prevalence of natural resources, environmental and marine education and awareness resulting in limited understanding of the marine environment and inadequate emphasis on scientific research of natural resources in general.

**Policy Objective:** To have an educated, informed and committed community taking leadership in, responsibility for and involving themselves in ecologically sustainable use of natural resources.

**Rationale:** A community will better understand and accept benefits and constraints on its use of the marine environment if it is well-informed and empowered. With the advent of new industries, there are opportunities for professional careers in scientific fields such as marine engineering, fisheries, marine geology, oceanography etc.

**Policies:**

To address the issue and objective stated, we will endeavour to ensure that:

- 11.1 Education programmes developed under this policy shall be both formal and informal and target diverse groups;
- 11.2 Education shall be delivered in accordance with “Te Kaveinga Ora no te Aorangi: Au Apii’anga no runga i te Aorangi” which promotes the use of initiatives that engage with and challenge the social and economic forces that shape human behaviour;
- 11.3 The public shall be regularly informed of progress and consulted on developments and decisions regarding marine management;
- 11.4 Information material for communities shall be produced using culturally appropriate and easily understood formats; and
- 11.5 Tertiary education in scientific fields shall be encouraged.

**Policy Indicators:**

- 11.1 Percentage of tertiary students enrolled in science programmes relevant to Marae Moana
- 11.2 ESD principles integrated into learning outcomes in the curricula (Pacific ESD Indicator 2.1)
- 11.3 Annual number of media` stories and letters to the newspaper relevant to Marae Moana
- 11.4 Number of people attending and engaging in public consultations on marine issues

## 12. Research and Monitoring

**Issue:** There is limited understanding of the marine environment and inadequate focus of resources on marine research in general.

**Policy Objective:** To foster a culture of investigation and research.

**Rationale:** The management of the Marae Moana will depend on basic and applied research and monitoring. Evidence-based decision-making requires investment in long-term monitoring of species and ecosystems in accordance with an agreed research agenda. Research capability will be built through coordinated and collaborative institutional arrangements and funding.



**Policies:**

To address the issue and objective stated, we will endeavour to ensure that:

- 12.1 Research capacity will be built through formal institutional arrangements and partnerships;
- 12.2 A research agenda that prioritises information needs will be developed and regularly evaluated;
- 12.3 Dissemination of information from research will be a priority;
- 12.4 Ecologically sustainable technologies, practices and materials for use in the Marae Moana will be encouraged;
- 12.5 Marine scientific research aspects under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and other international instruments will be implemented; and
- 12.6 Cooperative scientific research will be encouraged.

**Policy Indicators:**

- 12.1 Annual number of relevant research projects registered by the National Research Committee

### 13. Sustainable Financing

**Issue:** Insufficient resources for the governance and implementation of the Marae Moana.

**Policy Objective:** To seek long term sustainable financing for the Marae Moana in order to resource the activities of this policy, for example, coordination, planning, management, research, ecosystem and species monitoring, information sharing, stakeholder consultation, monitoring, compliance and enforcement.

**Rationale:** To be effective, the Marae Moana will require sustainable funding. Whilst costs of managing the Marae Moana are to be expected, the over-arching reach of the Marae Moana across multiple sectors and across government and non-government organisations will enable the identification and resolution of issues relating to funding inefficiencies. These include duplication of roles, gaps in communication and the duplication and inefficient use of funds.

**Policies:**

To address the issue and the objective stated, we will endeavour to ensure that:

- 13.1 A sustainable financing mechanism and an appropriate governing body for funding shall be selected based on a feasibility study of options and cost benefit analysis;
- 13.2 The sustainable financing mechanism selected shall have a clear focus on achieving Policy outcomes;
- 13.3 The sustainable financing mechanism shall entail diverse sources of finance to protect against over-reliance on limited sources of funding;
- 13.4 The membership of the governing body for the sustainable financing mechanism shall be diverse and participatory but shall include financial/economic and/or business expertise;
- 13.5 Annual reports and financial records will be public documents; and
- 13.6 The costs and benefits of marine activities under the Policy will be monitored.

**Policy Indicators:**

13.1 Number and source of funding available for implementation of this policy

13.2 Annual cost for the coordination and implementation of the Marae Moana activities

13.3 Annual amount of funds generated by the Marae Moana related activities

## 9.0 Institutional Arrangements

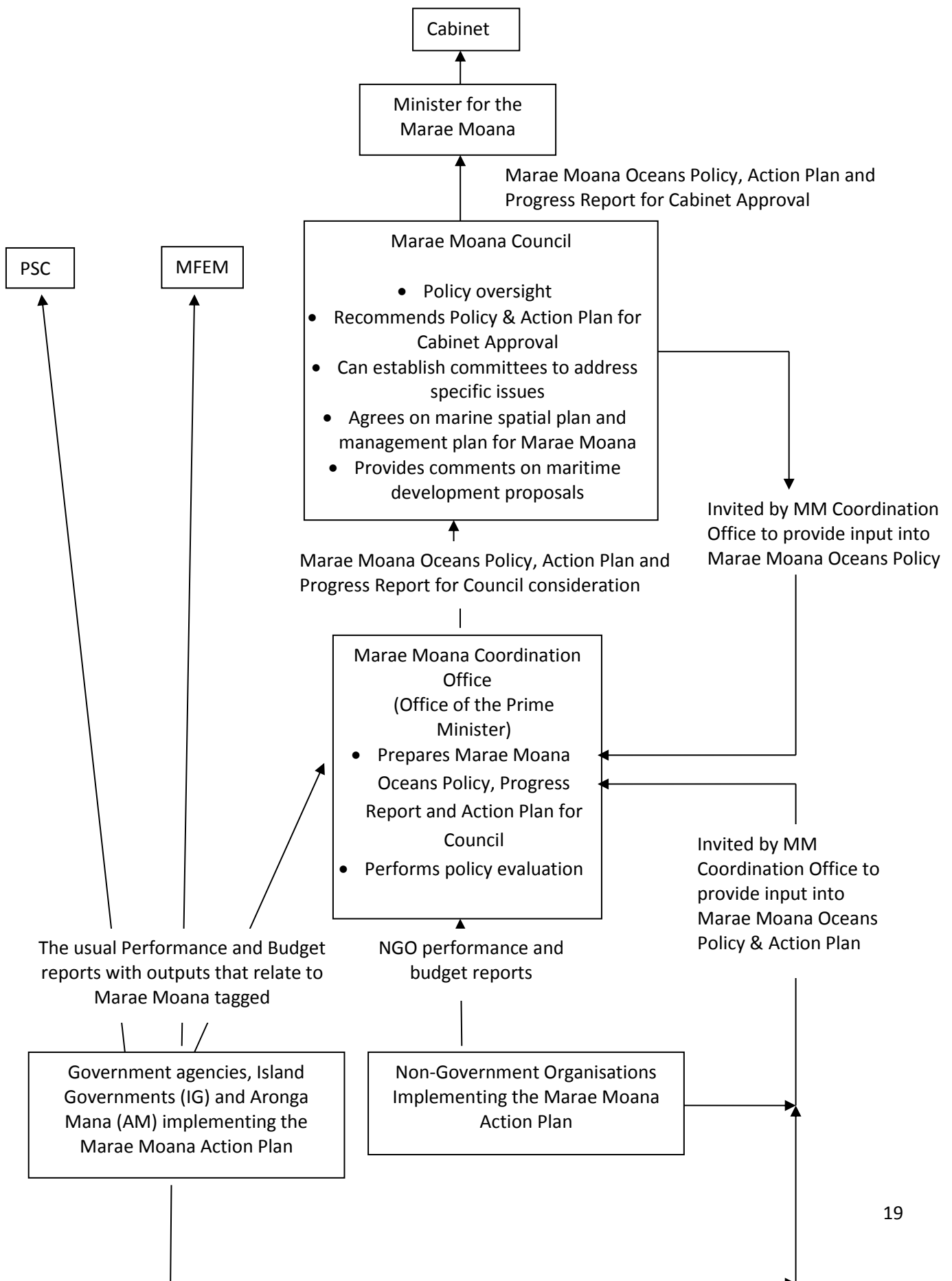
Current governance and management arrangements involve buy-in and participation of government agencies, communities, traditional leaders and local partners in the implementation of this policy. Governance over coastal areas varies between islands. For islands other than Rarotonga, the Island Governments have authority over their islands and coastal environment under the Island Government Act 2012-13 in collaboration with traditional leaders. On Rarotonga, traditional leaders and national government agencies share authority over the coastal environment. Traditional leaders have authority under customary law (though not codified) and government agencies have authority under national legislation.

The Marae Moana Council shall ensure that the Policy is achieving its objectives, agrees to revised versions of the Policy for approval by Cabinet and gains consensus on a Marae Moana Action Plan. The Council may establish committees to address specific issues related to the governance of the Marae Moana. The authority of the Marae Moana Council shall be legislated.

The Marae Moana Coordination Office within the Office of the Prime Minister shall coordinate implementation of this Policy, any revisions required and the development of the Marae Moana Action Plan. The Marae Moana Coordination Office shall also compile progress reports for the Marae Moana Council.

The Marae Moana Council shall work in collaboration with other established institutions of Government to ensure the implementation of this Policy.

FIGURE 1: INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MARAE MOANA OCEANS POLICY



## 1. Implementation Arrangements

A Marae Moana Action Plan shall be developed and will outline how this Policy will be implemented in further detail, as well as the agencies responsible for each of the actions. The Action Plan will be developed within 12 months of the endorsement of this Policy and shall be reviewed every four years.

In terms of oversight, the Island Governments on respective islands will be responsible for leading implementation of the Action Plan at the coastal scale. On Rarotonga, the Marae Moana Council oversees implementation of the Action Plan relating to the Rarotonga coast as well as offshore throughout the Cook Islands.

The Marae Moana Action Plan will incorporate actions to implement the policies outlined in this Policy. The Marae Moana Action Plan will emphasise integration.

## 2. Monitoring Evaluation and Reporting

The Marae Moana Coordination Office within the Office of the Prime Minister shall compile annual progress reports on implementation of the Marae Moana Action Plan for submission to the Marae Moana Council. Periodically, the Marae Moana Coordination Office should analyse the Policy and submit recommendations to the Marae Moana Council.

The specific monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements for each of the various agencies and organisations are outlined below.

### Government Agencies

- 1) Use the targets and indicators from relevant policy instruments in the annual business plan and budget submission as a basis for internal government monitoring and management;
- 2) Indicate which of the actions within their annual business plan, budget submission and performance reports contribute to the implementation of the Marae Moana Action Plan; and
- 3) Provide annual business plan, budget and performance reports to the Marae Moana Coordination Office for compilation into the Marae Moana Annual Progress Report

### Marae Moana Coordination Office

- 1) Shall provide a consolidated Marae Moana Annual Progress Report for the Marae Moana Council which includes:
  - a) Results achieved including (as appropriate) the impact of implementing the action plan in relation to the achievement of Policy goals and the relevant NSDP indicators;
  - b) Lessons learned;
  - c) Actions taken to improve performance and address issues/risks arising from implementation of the Marae Moana Action Plan; and
  - d) Forecast the Marae Moana Coordination Office programme for the next twelve months.
- 2) Submit required regional and international reports to relevant development partners.

### Non-Government and Civil Society Organisations

## Marae Moana Policy 2016-2020

Shall be invited by the Marae Moana Coordination Office to provide input for consolidation into the Marae Moana Annual Progress Report.